

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Office requires election of one of three allegedly patentably distinct species as illustrated in FIG. 3 ("Species I"), FIG. 4 ("Species II"), and FIG. 6 ("Species III"). By this response, Applicants hereby elect to prosecute the generic claims 1-3, 5, 10-11, 15-16, and 21-22, and claims 4, 6, 9, and 12-14 which correspond to FIG. 4, Species II. Prompt consideration of the merits of claims 1-6, 9-16, and 21-22 is respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicants note that claims 1-3, 5, 10-11, 15-16, and 21-22 comprise subject matter that is supported by, *inter alia*, FIGS. 3, 4, and 6. As a result, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are generic, and should be considered by the Office.

With respect to the three species cited by the Office, Applicants note that:

Species I: the subject matter of claims 4, 6, and 14 is supported by, *inter alia*, FIG. 3;

Species II: the subject matter of claims 4, 6, 9, and 12-14 is supported by, *inter alia*, FIG. 4; and

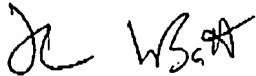
Species III: the subject matter of claims 7-8 and 17-20 is supported by, *inter alia*, FIG. 6.

As noted above, Applicants hereby elect the generic claims and Species II. As a group, this comprises claims 1-6, 9-16, and 21-22. As a result, Applicants respectfully request prompt consideration of the merits of these claims.

While not traversed herein, this Election does not constitute an admission to the facts alleged in the Office's requirement. To this extent, Applicants reserve the right to traverse the Office's requirement at a later time.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all elected claims are in condition for prompt consideration on the merits, and respectfully request this consideration. Should the Examiner require anything further, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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